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As part of an ESEA Title III study of selected aspects of the program at Abington High School-North Campus, a committee was formed to (1) identify valid objectives for large group instruction used at the school, and (2) determine teacher appraisal of the extent to which these objectives were being reached. The committee constructed an opinionnaire based on the objectives which were identified. Completed opinionnaires were received from 32 teachers. Six conclusions concerning large group instruction were reached: (1) Teachers evidenced a high degree of creativity in planning for and presenting their lessons; (2) teachers were selected to conduct the lessons because of some special knowledge, talent, or ability; (3) the scheduling of teachers for supervision during those times when they were not actually involved in the presentation could be done more prudently; (4) when planning presentations teachers should make provision for increased pupil involvement in the actual presentation; (5) those responsible for planning presentations did not make effective use of outside resources; and (6) the large group lesson is an effective way of helping teachers avoid needless repetition of materials. Recommendations based on these conclusions are made. (HW)

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# THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OBJECTIVES FOR LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION AND TEACHER'S APPRAISAL OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE OBJECTIVES WERE BEING ACHIEVED

Frederick R. Mayer

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Abington High School-North Campus
Abington, Pennsylvania
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer is greatly indebted to the committee members who worked long and hard at making the project a success. The committee included Richard Bell, Maxine Friend, Shirley Lassoff, and William Pacropis. Their interest, cooperation, and counsel have made this study possible.

Pauline L. Edwards, Coordinator of Research, and her staff made a significant contribution to the study by designing and administering the research instrument.

Finally, the writer is indebted to the many teachers of Abington High School-North Campus whose cooperation was essential. Without their help, the study would not have been possible.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE PROBLEM

In the modern high school many innovations find their way into the school curriculum and are retained in subsequent years for a variety of reasons. Not infrequently a practice that was at one time both innovative and useful has become a continuing practice, with the weight of its earlier usefulness dictating that it remain. As a result, many schools have moved from one school year to the next continuing to include in their programs "innovations" that no longer serve any useful purpose, at least in their current form. Of course the laws of chance dictate that certain innovative practices, although never subjected to study and appraisal, endure from year to year with a relative degree of effectiveness. However, such practices have not earned a place in the school curriculum and should be viewed with skepticism until tested by the researcher. Unless one is willing to risk an ever-widening breach between current practice and long-term educational goals, each innovative practice must be subjected to a continuing process of evaluation.

All decisions to retain, modify, or drop innovative practices from the school program should be based upon the results of research and evaluation.

The present study is the result of one school's effort to investigate and evaluate selected aspects of the school's program. In this paper, only one program innovation will be subjected to scruity --that of large group instruction.

Large group instruction has been used at Abington High School-North Campus since the school was opened in 1964. The special large group rooms have been used for countless hours by thousands of students each year since the school opened. At this point in time, it is of interest to look at this once innovative practice more carefully, for the purpose of refining and improving it. The present study, therefore, sought to investigate and evaluate selected aspects of large group instruction at Abington High School-North Campus.

## THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The study sought: (1) to identify valid objectives for large group instruction and, (2) to determine teacher appraisal of the extent to which these objectives were being reached in Abington High School-North Campus.

Justification of the study. The practice of continuing to include large group instruction lessons in the school's program was largely based upon the experience of the individual teacher as expressed in opinion and casual observation. This study was

the result of an effort to place the future inclusion of this practice on a firmer research base.

A comprehensive list of valid objectives for large group instruction had not been developed by the school prior to the incorporation of this practice in the school's program; therefore, it was felt that the development of objectives for large group instruction would provide valuable guidelines for both present and future evaluation in this area.

The purposes of the study. Since large group instruction played such an important role in the instructional life of the school, it was felt that two important purposes should guide the study. These two purposes were:

1. To provide a set of valid objectives for large group instruction.
2. To determine teacher appraisal of the extent to which the objectives for large group instruction were being realized through current practice.

Delimitations of the study. Statistical data for the study were sought for the school year 1966-67.

Only teachers teaching in Abington High School-North Campus were included in the study.

The study was not concerned with the evaluation of specific large group presentations or with the effectiveness of these presentations as viewed by teachers and students.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study, the terms listed below have been used as stipulated.

1. Class: a group of pupils (usually between twenty and thirty in number) who are scheduled together at a specific time and placed with an individual teacher for the purpose of pursuing the study of a specific subject or engaging in a specific activity.
2. Large group instruction: an instructional period that takes place when two or more classes or an equivalent number of pupils join together (usually in a special room) for the purpose of sharing a unique educational experience.

## CHAPTER II

## RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A review of the recent educational literature revealed that a study of the kind contemplated by the committee had not been done, nor had other schools within the district undertaken the task of formulating and appraising the objectives of large group instruction. Therefore, the committee assigned the task of formulating these objectives set to work on their task with few guidelines.

Initial committee discussions attempted to identify the educational objectives of large group instruction and the subsidiary values that accrued as a result of including large group instruction in the school's program. Committee members met informally with faculty members and school administrators, searched the literature for pertinent research and commentary, and drew on their own experiences with large group teaching in an effort to formulate the objectives. In addition, all committee members read Mager's book Preparing Instructional Objectives as a pre-requisite to engaging in discussions that took place during the final phase of this task.

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[1]Robert F. Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives (Palo Alto, California: F.P. Fearon Publishers, Inc. 1962)

Educational objectives for large group instruction. In January of 1967, the committee completed the formulation of the first draft of the statement of objectives for large group instruction and submitted their interim report (see Appendix A, page 19) to the school administration for review. The report was then forwarded to Maurice E. Lindvall of the University of Pittsburgh, Professor of Educational Research, for review and validation. The interim report was returned to the committee by Dr. Lindvall with his comments and suggestions. The committee reviewed Dr. Lindvall's comments and revised the report where revisions were indicated. The statement of objectives was then prepared in its final form (see Appendix B, page 20). This form of the list of objectives for large group instruction was later used as the basis for the opinionnaire instrument used in the study.

## SURVEY OF FACULTY OPINION

The survey instrument. Before selecting the approach to be taken in collecting the information needed to determine teachers' views concerning the extent to which the objectives for large group instruction were being met in the North Campus program, several research methods were studied and the feasibility of their application to the present study estimated. Finally, it was determined that the survey method was the most appropriate for use in collecting the data needed.

Accordingly, a questionnaire or more precisely an opinionnaire instrument was designed by the committee (see Appendix C, pages 22 and 23). The statements in the opinionnaire to which responses were later solicitated were based upon the validated objectives for large group instruction developed earlier by the committee.

Next, the opinionnaire was submitted to Pauline Edwards, Director of Research at North Campus, for review and comment. The opinionnaire was then prepared in its final form.

The opinionnaire instrument was then submitted to each member of the faculty for review, completion, and return. After several days had passed, a follow-up request was made for the return of completed opinionnaires. In the space below there is a summary of teacher participation in the survey.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of teachers on staff | 109 |
| Number of teachers active in large group instruction. | 90 |
| Number of completed opinion-naires. | 32 |

The number of completed opinionnaires (32) represents 29.3 per cent of the number of teachers on the staff and 35.5 per cent of the number of teachers active in large group instruction.

Faculty response to the opinionnaire. In Table 1, the twelve statements presented to faculty members in the opinionnaire instrument are listed and the number and percentage of respondents in each of the four categories, i.e., Yes, To Some Extent, Not Sure, and No, is given. Since it did not seem significant to carry the percentages to decimal places, each per cent has been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

A study of Table 1 shows that 81 per cent of the respondents felt that a variety of procedures and techniques were used in large group presentations; 66 per cent indicated that in some cases a number of teachers were involved in the several phases of a single program; and, 63 per cent of the respondents indicated that novice teachers were able to witness large group presentations of experienced teachers.

Further study of Table 1 reveals that 53 per cent of the respondents felt that teachers were not freed from supervisory duties in the large group room so that the time could be spent giving individual help to pupils. Eighteen of the respondents (57 per cent) indicated that effective use was not made of community, university, or other resources outside the school.

Table I

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS CONCERNING LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION

| STATEMENT: | RESPONSE | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | | To Some Extent | | Not Sure | | No | |
| | No. | Per Cent | No. | Per Cent | No. | Per Cent | No. | Per Cent |
| 1. A variety of procedures and techniques were used in lesson presentation. | 25 | 81 | 5 | 16 | | | 1 | 3 |
| 2. Each lesson was conducted by persons with special knowledge, talent, and/or ability. | 10 | 31 | 13 | 56 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| 3. Each teacher had more time to prepare for any one lesson presentation. | 8 | 25 | 9 | 28 | 5 | 16 | 10 | 31 |
| 4. Teachers were freed from supervisory duties in the large group room and used this time to give individual help to pupils. | 1 | 3 | 11 | 34 | 3 | 10 | 17 | 53 |
| 5. A pupil was able to perform before or share with his peers in the large group setting. | | | 15 | 47 | 4 | 16 | 12 | 37 |
| 6. In some cases a number of teachers were involved in the several phases of a single program. | 21 | 66 | 9 | 28 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 7. The pupil shared special devices, equipment, and materials that would not be available for use with a single class. | 12 | 25 | 8 | 13 | 4 | 37 | 8 | 25 |

TABLE I (CONTINUED)

| STATEMENT: | RESPONSE | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | | To Some Extent | | Not Sure | | No | |
| | No. | Per Cent | No. | Per Cent | No. | Per Cent | No. | Per Cent |
| 8. Teachers experienced the stimulation involved in preparing for and presenting the large group lesson. | 15 | 46 | 11 | 34 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 10 |
| 9. Novice teachers were able to witness large group presentations of experienced teachers. | 20 | 63 | 7 | 22 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| 10. The saving in teacher time facilitated scheduling of small groups. | 6 | 19 | 8 | 25 | 8 | 25 | 10 | 31 |
| 11. Effective use was made of community, university and other outside resources. | 2 | 6 | 10 | 31 | 2 | 6 | 18 | 57 |
| 12. The needless repetition of the same material to several class groups was eliminated. | 20 | 63 | 11 | 34 | | | 1 | 3 |

# CHAPTER III

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study, presents conclusions based on the findings, and offers certain recommendations.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A summary of the findings of the study follows:

1. The majority of the respondents (81 per cent) indicated that large group presentations included a variety of procedures and techniques.
2. Fifty-six per cent of the respondents indicated that "to some extent" lessons in large group were conducted by persons with special knowledge, talent, and/or ability, while 31 per cent responded "yes" to this statement.
3. Respondents were divided concerning the statement that each teacher had more time to prepare for any one lesson. Responses were as follows: yes, 25 per cent; to some extent, 28 per cent; not sure, 15 per cent; and, no, 31 per cent.
4. The majority of respondents (53 per cent) indicated that teachers were not freed from supervisory

duties in the large group room so that time could be used to give individual help to pupils. Only 3 per cent of the respondents responded with "yes;" 34 per cent "to some extent," while 10 per cent were "not sure."

5. Responses to the statement concerning whether or not pupils were able to perform before or share with their peers in the large group setting were as follows: yes, zero per cent; to some extent, 47 per cent; not sure, 16 per cent; and, no, 37 per cent.
6. Ninety-four per cent of the respondents indicated that more than one teacher was involved in the several phases of a single program or that to some extent this was the case.
7. To the statement concerning the pupils' sharing of special devices, equipment, and materials that would not be available for use with single classes, respondents were divided, with 25 per cent indicating "yes," 13 per cent "to some extent," 37 per cent "not sure," and 25 per cent "no."
8. The majority of respondents (46 per cent, yes and 34 per cent, to some extent) indicated that teachers did experience the stimulation involved in preparing

and presenting large group lessons.

9. In the majority of cases (63 per cent) respondents indicated that novice teachers were able to witness large group presentations of experienced teachers.

10. In response to the statement concerning the saving in teacher time facilitated scheduling of small groups there was division, with 19 per cent indicating "yes," 25 per cent indicating "to some extent," 25 per cent indicating "not sure," and 31 per cent, "no."

11. The majority of respondents (57 per cent) stated that the school did not make effective use of the community, university, or other agencies outside the school in presenting large group lessons.

12. A large majority of those completing the opinionnaire (97 per cent) responded with "yes" or "to some extent" to the statement concerning the elimination of needless repetition of the same material to several classes through the use of large group presentations.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the finding of the study the following conclusions can be drawn concerning large group instruction at Abington High School-North Campus during the school year 1966-67.

1. Teachers evidenced a high degree of creativity in planning for and presenting their large group lessons.
2. Teachers selected to conduct large group lessons were selected because of some special knowledge, talent, and/or ability.
3. The scheduling of teachers for supervision in large group rooms during those times when they were not actively involved in the presentation could be done more prudently.
4. When planning large group presentations, teachers should make provision for increased involvement of pupils in the actual presentation.
5. Those responsible for planning large group presentations did <u>not</u> make effective use of community, university, or other resources outside the school.

6. The large group lesson is an effective way of helping teachers avoid the needless repetition of material in their presentations to the individual classes in their schedules.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the conclusions drawn in the study, the following recommendations seem relevant:

1. Certain teachers should be designated as teachers of large group lessons and because of this assignment should be given more time in the schedule to prepare for their presentations.
2. In those instances where five or six teachers are scheduled to the large group room for a single presentation, those teachers not needed for supervision should be relieved of their assignment to spend their time working with individuals or small groups, preparing future large group lessons, or pursuing activities related to their teaching assignment.
3. Planning of large group presentations should be done on a long term basis so that plans could be made to include pupil participants in certain lessons.
4. The department chairman in each subject area should designate someone to create and maintain a file

of names of individuals in the community or in nearby universities who would be willing to present large group lessons in the field of their special achievement or background. It is hoped that those scheduling large group lessons might include qualified guest speakers in their plans.

5. Because of the positive values of large group instruction, a study of those curriculum areas in which large group presentations are not currently scheduled should be undertaken. Such a study might identify the benefits to be derived by including such lessons in these subject areas.

## ADDENDUM

In the present study, a number of difficulties were encountered in applying the opinionnaire instrument to the task of collecting information from staff members. As a result of this problem, the data finally compiled do not reveal certain biases that may have existed in the population from which responses were sought. Therefore, it is suggested that the present study be used as a point of departure for future research in this field. The writer suggests that the in-depth-interview be explored as one approach to collecting the data necessary.

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# APPENDIX

EXHIBIT NO. 17b.

ABINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
NORTH CAMPUS
Abington, Pennsylvania

January 4, 1967

# INTERIM REPORT OF FACULTY COMMITTEE ON OBJECTIVES OF LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION

Definition: We think of "large group instruction" as taking place when two or more classes or an equivalent number of pupils (approximately forty or more in number) join together usually in a specially designed room for the purpose of sharing a unique educational experience.

Objectives:

1. To vary an individual class's routine in a specific subject, thus stimulating individual pupil's interest through variety of lesson presentation.

2. To provide the pupil with lessons conducted by persons with special knowledge, talent, and/or ability.

3. To enable the individual pupil to share in the contagion of interest that may develop in the large group as the lesson unfolds.

4. To enable the individual pupil to benefit from the extraordinary efforts of the teacher in planning and preparing the large group presentation.

5. To give individual attention to students that they may receive outside the large group setting from teachers that have been freed from supervisory duties in the large group room.

6. To enable the individual pupil to perform before or share with his peers in the large group setting.

7. To stimulate and retain the attention of pupils in the large group through the use of a number of teachers in the several phases of a single program.

8. To enable the pupil to share special devices, equipment, and materials that would not be available for use with a single class.

9. To stimulate teachers to exceed their best efforts in preparing for and presenting the large group lesson.

10. To enable novice teachers to witness large group presentations of experienced teachers.

11. To afford a saving in teacher time, so as to facilitate scheduling of small group.

12. To make effective use of community, university and other outside resources.

13. To eliminate needless repetition of the same material to several class groups.

Chairman: Fred Mayer

EXHIBIT NO. 17b.

ABINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
NORTH CAMPUS
Abington, Pennsylvania

January 4, 1967

INTERIM REPORT OF FACULTY COMMITTEE ON OBJECTIVES OF LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION

Definition: We think of "large group instruction" as taking place when two or more classes or an equivalent number of pupils (approximately forty or more in number) join together usually in a specially designed room for the purpose of sharing a unique educational experience.

Objectives:

As a result of large group instruction:

1. A variety of procedures and techniques will be used in lesson presentation.
2. Each lesson will be conducted by persons with special knowledge, talent, and/or ability.
3. Each teacher will have more time to prepare for any one lesson presentation.
4. Teachers will be freed from supervisory duties in the large group room and will use this time to give individual help to pupils.
5. A pupil will be able to perform before or share with his peers in the large group setting.
6. In some cases a number of teachers will be involved in the several phases of a single program.
7. The pupil will share special devices, equipment, and materials that would not be available for use with a single class.
8. Teachers will experience the stimulation involved in preparing for and presenting the large group lesson.
9. Novice teachers will be able to witness large group presentations of experienced teachers.
10. The saving in teacher time will facilitate scheduling of small group.
11. Effective use will be made of community, university and other outside resources.
12. The needless repetition of the same material to several class groups will be eliminated.

Chairman: Fred Mayer

# EVALUATION OF THE LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION PROGRAM AT NORTH CAMPUS

A committee of members of the faculty have been studying the use of large groups at North Campus. In order to evaluate this phase of our program, we feel that a survey of the teachers involved in the program would be beneficial. Therefore, we are asking your cooperation in completing the attached questionnaire.

Large group instruction has been a part of your schedule in English, world civilization, and science courses. Teachers in each of these areas are being asked to give their honest and serious reactions to these large groups. No statistics will be valid unless each one gives his completely fair and frank opinions.

If you feel the statement is usually true, check the Yes column.
If you feel it is sometimes true, check the To Some Extent column.
If you are not sure or feel unable to make a judgment, check the Not Sure column.
If you feel the statement is not true, check the No column.

Thank you for your fair, honest, and serious cooperation. North Campus has always considered teacher reactions in planning and improving its program.

Fred Mayer, Chairman
William Pacropis
Shirley Lassoff
Maxine Friend
Richard Bell

# TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ON LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION

As a result of large group instruction:

| | Yes | To Some Extent | Not Sure | No |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. A variety of procedures and techniques were used in lesson presentation. | | | | |
| 2. Each lesson was conducted by persons with special knowledge, talent, and/or ability. | | | | |
| 3. Each teacher had more time to prepare for any one lesson presentation. | | | | |
| 4. Teachers were freed from supervisory duties in the large group room and used this time to give individual help to pupils. | | | | |
| 5. A pupil was able to perform before or share with his peers in the large group setting. | | | | |
| 6. In some cases a number of teachers were involved in the several phases of a single program. | | | | |
| 7. The pupil shared special devices, equipment, and materials that would not be available for use with a single class. | | | | |
| 8. Teachers experienced the stimulation involved in preparing for and presenting the large group lesson. | | | | |
| 9. Novice teachers were able to witness large group presentations of experienced teachers. | | | | |
| 10. The saving in teacher time facilitated scheduling of small groups. | | | | |
| 11. Effective use was made of community, university and other outside resources. | | | | |
| 12. The needless repetition of the same material to several class groups was eliminated. | | | | |